



Operations Memorandum

OPI: CPD/RSB
NUMBER: 017-2004 (5360)
DATE: 9/27/2004
SUBJECT: Life Connections
Program, a Residential
Pre-Release Pilot

EXPIRATION DATE: 9/27/2005

This OM is being reissued because the pilot program is still in operation. This OM is the same as the original OM issued in 2003 (001-03). Only the dates have been changed.

1. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE.** To establish guidelines to implement the Life Connections Program (LCP), a pilot residential pre-release program in low, medium and high security institutions. The demonstration sites are the Federal Correctional Institutions at Milan, Michigan, Petersburg, Virginia, and Victorville, California, the Federal Medical Center, Carswell, Fort Worth, Texas, and the United States Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas.

To foster personal growth and responsibility and to right the relationships among the victim, the community, and the inmate, the program will use the inmate's faith commitment to bring reconciliation and restoration. Participants will be helped to take responsibility for their criminal behavior. Faith groups in the community at the inmates' release destinations will be asked to volunteer as support groups for the inmate participants upon release.

The program curriculum focuses on the personal growth and change through the deepening of one's religious/spiritual roots and requires the inmate's faith commitment. Through the pilot, the Bureau of Prisons provides opportunities for the development and maturation of the participating inmates' faith commitment, believing this will result in overall changed behavior, better institutional adjustment and a reduction in recidivism rates.

2. **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES.** The expected results of this program are:

a. Through living within the boundaries of their faith, inmates improved institutional adjustment will be demonstrated.

b. Working closely with outside faith communities in release preparation and continued sponsorship, the rate of re-arrests and recidivism will be reduced.

3. DIRECTIVES REFERENCED

P5100.07 Security Designation and Custody Classification Manual (9/3/99)
P5267.07 Visiting Regulations (4/14/2003)
P5360.08 Religious Beliefs and Practices (5/25/01)

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Warden.** The Warden at each institution will ensure that all aspects of this Operations Memorandum are implemented.

b. **Life Connections Program Coordinator, Central Office.** The Life Connections Program is a Chaplaincy Services program. Overall responsibility for the development and provision of technical expertise for the program rests with the Chaplaincy Services Branch.

The Life Connections Program Coordinator, whose office is located in the Chaplaincy Services Branch, Correctional Programs Division, in the Central Office and the respective Regional Chaplaincy Administrators will provide necessary program and curriculum development as well as technical support.

c. **Life Connections Program Chaplain.** All programming and administrative aspects of the pilot program are the responsibility of the staff Chaplain in charge of the local institution program. The Program Chaplain has primary responsibility for the LCP program's spiritual leadership and administration.

The Program Chaplain will assist participating inmates to formulate meaningful goals. The appropriate Associate Warden has program oversight responsibilities and will supervise the Life Connections Program Chaplain Manager.

d. **Unit Staff.** The Life Connections Program Unit Manager ensures that regular communication and coordination between the Chaplain and the Unit Team exists. The Program Chaplain will participate in the Classification Team meetings. Both Unit Team members and the Program Chaplain will encourage and monitor program activities during regularly scheduled team meetings.

e. **Other Departments.** The Central Office Life Connections Program Coordinator will train staff Chaplains and other institution program staff in the different elements of the program to integrate the program goals with inmate participation in all other aspects of the institution.

5. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

a. Program Selection Criteria

- Inmates must apply for the program voluntarily (BP-S741).
- Inmates must be within 24 to 60 months of projected release date. The length of time remaining on the sentence is not a consideration for high security inmates.
- Female inmates must be within 24 to 120 months of projected release date. Priority will be given to those with shorter sentences.
- Inmates must not have a written deportation order.
- Inmates must receive a recommendation from the sending institution Chaplaincy team, Unit Team, and Associate Warden. (BP-S742)
- Inmates must be approved by the sending institution's Warden. (BP-S742)
- Inmates may not be in *FRP refuse* status.
- Inmates must be meeting or have met GED obligations.
- Inmates must have met ESL obligations.
- Inmates must be willing to have the Life Connections Program site designated for them.
- Inmates must take part in a three-session orientation.

b. Program Structure

(1) Program Population

- The initial cohort of participants in the Pilot will be 32 to 36 inmates. The second cohort of 32

to 36 inmates will ordinarily begin after six months and a third group will begin after twelve months.

- The program duration for the inmate participants is 18 months.

(2) **Multi-Faith Make-up.** The program is open to inmates of all faiths or those still seeking a spiritual grounding. The program's scope does not allow for denominationalism or tribalism. Instead, the inmates who volunteer will be accommodated in broad religious categories sharing common religious beliefs and principles of faith. These include Protestant Christian, Catholic Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist, Native American, and others.

Exactly which faith groups will be represented depends on the inmates who volunteer for the program. Inmates who are seeking spiritual truth through indigenous religions and nature-based spiritualities will be grouped together in a separate category. Differences in religious teachings or disciplines within each broad category will be identified and integrated by the community leaders of the respective faith groups.

(3) **Schedule for Program Activities**

- The curriculum will involve five days of regularly scheduled afternoon and evening programming as well as scheduled weekend activities.
- Participating inmates will have institution work assignments for up to four hours a day during the unscheduled program hours.
- Evening and weekend programming will involve special activities with mentors, multi-faith, and faith-specific components. Program participants will join the general population for religious study and worship services, education, recreation, work assignments, etc.
- Program participants will participate in their respective general population worship service and one religious study program each week.

c. **Housing.** The Life Connections Program is a residential program. Ordinarily, all inmates living in the assigned housing unit will be:

- engaged in the Life Connections Program;
- waiting to participate in the Life Connections Program;
or
- have completed the Life Connections Program.

Participants from the same faith tradition will work/study/pray together in small groups.

6. PROGRAM REFERRAL

a. Inmates who volunteer for the Life Connections Program will submit a completed application packet to the institution Chaplain and participate in a standardized three-session orientation program. The three-session orientation program will be:

- **Session 1:** Overview of the Life Connections Program;
- **Session 2:** Feedback and exploration of the Life Connections Program; and
- **Session 3:** Actual interview and administration of the Spiritual Assessment Evaluation.

b. When an inmate who volunteers to participate in the Life Connections Program is identified as being eligible, the Chaplain will contact the inmate's Unit Team. In considering an inmate for referral, all policies and procedures applicable to redesignation and transfer of inmates will be followed. The Unit Team will submit a referral packet consisting of the following:

- (1) Life Connections Program forms;
 - LCP Program Participation Request and Agreement form (BP-S741); and
 - LCP Program Referral form (BP-S742);
- (2) An up-to-date Progress Report;
- (3) A Request for Transfer/Application of Management Variable form (EMS-409) with program participation code 324; and
- (4) The completed Spiritual Life Survey.

c. Unit Staff will send all completed application packets directly to:

Faith Based Programs Coordinator
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street NW
Room 516
Washington, DC 20534

The Central Office Correctional Programs Branch and the Chaplaincy Services Branch will review the applications and designate all qualified applicants to the appropriate pilot site.

If an applicant is currently housed at one of the LCP pilot sites, a review committee consisting of the Program Chaplain, Unit Manager and Associate Warden will review the application materials. Upon the Warden's approval, the inmate may be admitted to the program. A copy of the completed application packet will be forwarded to the Faith Based Programs Coordinator, Central Office.

d. Ordinarily, the referring Unit Team will receive documentation via BOPNet GroupWise regarding the inmate's acceptance or denial for the program within 30 days of a referral and enter the appropriate SENTRY code.

7. **CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION.** The Life Connections Program will include the following components:

a. **Spirituality and Worship**

- Increased opportunities for spiritual direction and worship;
- Participation in institution's worship services; and
- Use of journaling and personal reflection to develop spiritual growth.

b. **Religious Education Component**

- Faith-specific study material; and
- Interfaith curriculum.

c. **Religious Community Mentoring Component**

- Developing relationships with community-based faith groups;
- Establishing mentoring guidelines; and
- Meeting with the participants weekly with additional meetings determined locally in accordance with program needs.

d. **Community Service Component**

- Developing ways for community service.

e. **Victim Impact Component**

- Developing the violation of relationships model;
- Clarifying impact of crime on victims; and
- Providing interaction with Victim Impact Panels.

8. INVOLVEMENT OF THE FAITH COMMUNITIES

a. **Mentoring During Incarceration Phase.** A trained mentor will be matched with each inmate participant during this phase. The mentor will meet the participant weekly to:

- Reflect on spiritual issues of brokenness and healing;
- Model appropriate social behaviors from a faith perspective; and
- Work with the inmate to develop an appropriate action plan for spiritual maintenance upon reentry into the inmate population at program completion.

These meetings will ordinarily take place in the institution's Visiting Room.

b. **Partnership with Faith Community at Release Destination.** This partnership is designed to assist the inmate with healthy community reintegration upon release.

- This partnership will begin during the incarceration phase and intensify as the inmate transitions back into the community.
- Training materials will be provided for the sponsoring faith communities.
- If at all possible, representatives of the faith communities will visit with inmate participants at least once in the institution's Visiting Room.
- Correspondence with the sponsored inmates is strongly encouraged, so the inmates will have a sense of belonging to that faith community before release.
- The addition of the representatives of the faith community to the participating inmates' visiting list is an exception to the general requirement of having an established relationship prior to confinement.

- These visits will ordinarily not be counted against their allotted number of social visits per month. The frequency of these visits will be determined locally in accordance with program needs.

9. **SENTRY PROGRAM CODES.** Each participant's current program status will be maintained on SENTRY. The appropriate Unit Team must make timely and accurate SENTRY assignment changes.

- **LCP UNQUAL** - An inmate who requests participation in the Life Connections Program but does not meet one or more of the admissions' criteria. This assignment will remain active until there is a change in status.
- **LCP WAIT** - An inmate who meets the admissions criteria will have this assignment added. The inmate will remain on the waiting list until formal participation in the Life Connections Program.
- **LCP PART** - An inmate who begins participation in the Life Connections Program. Additional guidelines apply:
 - The LCP PART assignment will replace LCP WAIT and will remain a current assignment until the inmate ends participation in the Life Connections Program.
 - The LCP PART assignment will not be entered until the inmate is housed in the separate Life Connections Program Unit at one of the pilot institutions.
 - The LCP PART assignment will be replaced by one of the termination assignments below when the inmate ends participation in the program.
- **LCP COMP** - An inmate who successfully completes the Life Connections Program.
- **LCP INCOMP** - An inmate who does not complete the Life Connections Program for reasons beyond his or her control (e.g. writ, medical, etc.).
- **LCP FAIL W** - An inmate who does not complete the Life Connections Program because he or she withdraws from the program.
- **LCP FAIL E** - An inmate who does not complete the Life

Connections Program because of behavior requiring expulsion.

10. **PROGRAM COMPLETION.** Upon completing the Life Connections Program successfully, inmate participants will be moved from the program unit to another unit to make room for new participants. To enhance the ties made with the faith community, every effort will be made to designate an institution for the inmate close to the scheduled release destination.

11. **PROGRAM EXPULSION.** The Warden after receiving a recommendation from the institution's LCP Review Committee, will make the final decision regarding an inmate's expulsion. Inmates may be expelled for the following reasons:

- Violation of the Bureau's disciplinary rules and regulations as determined by the Unit Discipline Committee or Discipline Hearing Officer;
- Program failure; or
- Failure to meet other program requirements, such as financial responsibility or education obligations.

Inmates expelled from the Life Connections Program will ordinarily be returned to the sending institution.

12. **PROGRAM EVALUATION.** The Office of Research and Evaluation will evaluate the Life Connections Program's effectiveness. This evaluation will compare institutional conduct prior to participation in the program with behavior during and after program completion.

a. **Duration.** There will be a one to four year follow-up of all participants who complete the program to evaluate the impact on recidivism rates and/or institution management.

b. **Spiritual Life Survey (SLS).** As part of the three-session orientation at the referring institution, each applicant will be administered a Spiritual Life Survey. This will be used as a baseline measurement.

- Upon completing the formal program, inmate participants will take the Spiritual Life Survey again. This evaluation will measure each participant's spiritual growth.

- Three control groups will be established consisting of female low security inmates and male medium and low security inmates.
- The Spiritual Life Survey's sole purpose is to measure the integration of the faith and life of each participant. At no time will the SLS's results be used as criteria for admission to, continuation in, or expulsion from the program.

c. **Follow-up Study.** Where feasible, a follow-up study will be conducted after release with the faith community to measure the effectiveness of the faith support received during the transition process.

- The follow-up assessment will provide information on the rate of re-arrests and recidivism.
- This assessment will help to identify the most effective methods used by the faith communities.

13. **PROGRAM RESOURCES.** The Executive Staff has dedicated resources for the Life Connections Program. Funding will be disbursed through the Chaplaincy Services Cost Center.

14. **STAFF TRAINING.** The Life Connections Program Chaplain and Unit staff will receive training, focusing on the interdisciplinary approach governing the program. Training will also provide:

- a review of the Life Connections Program's philosophy,
- program implementation requirements,
- instructional skills and materials required, and
- integrating the program into the institution.

/s/

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